

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. NE WIN--TIN EAR AND IRON HAND OR
XMAS REVELERS IN NE WIN SITUATION

ROCK MUSIC FROM A HOTEL NEAR THE PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE
SPOILED NE WIN'S CHRISTMAS, EMBASSY RANGOON REPORTS.
INFURIATED BY NOISE FROM A CHRISTMAS EVE DANCE PARTY,
THE PRESIDENT CHARGED THROUGH THE BACK DOOR OF THE HOTEL
AND:

--PUNCHED THE HOTEL MANAGER;

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--SLAPPED A BURMESE OFFICIAL'S WIFE;

--PULLED THE DRUMMER'S HAIR AND PERFORATED HIS
DRUM;

--ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO KNOCK OVER THE AMPLIFI-
ERS.

A EUROPEAN GUEST WHO TRIED TO PROTEST WAS PROMPTLY KAYOED
BY THE PRESIDENT AND TAKEN AWAY, ALONG WITH HIS WIFE, BY
SOLDIERS. (CONFIDENTIAL) RANGOON 3620, 12/26.

2. ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA: A NEW OGADEN FRONT?

EMBASSY ADDIS ABABA REPORTS THAT A RASH OF MILITARY IN-
CIDENTS IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA MAY SOON BEGIN TO STRAIN
THE ARMY'S REACTIVE CAPABILITY. RECENT EVENTS INCLUDE:

--AMBUSHES AND SABOTAGE IN THE OGADEN REGION,
POSSIBLY BY SOMALI SOLDIERS OR IRREGULARS;

--SOMALI MILITARY MANEUVERS NEAR THE TFAI;

--REPORTS OF SIZEABLE NUMBERS OF SOMALI "INFILTRA-
TORS" THROUGHOUT A VAST AREA ON ETHIOPIA'S EASTERN
AND SOUTHERN BORDERS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE THE DEGREE OF SOMALI INVOLVEMENT
IS STILL UNCLEAR, MOGADISCIO MAY INTEND TO OPEN A NEW
FRONT--OGADEN OR WIDER--TO FURTHER STRETCH ETHIOPIA'S
ALREADY OVERTAXED TROOPS, PERHAPS IN PREPARATION FOR A
SOMALI MOVE IN THE TFAI. THE EXTENT OF THE SOVIET ROLE
IS ALSO UNCLEAR. A MAJOR ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI CONFRONTATION
WOULD PUT THE SOVIETS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION, BUT
MOSCOW COULD BE COUNTING ON MAINTAINING A CONTROLLED
STATE OF TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES TO DRIVE
SOMALIA EVER MORE FIRMLY INTO THE SOVIET CAMP. (CONFI-
DENTIAL) ADDIS ABABA 14853, 12/24.

3. GROMYKO/RIFAI DEAL IN GENERALITIES

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ACCORDING TO THE DECEMBER 24 EDITION OF PRAVDA, GROMYKO
AND THE JORDANIAN DELEGATION HEADED BY RIFAI IN THEIR
MEETING ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION AGREED THAT:

--PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY IF ALL ARAB LAND IS
LIBERATED AND THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTI-
NIANS ARE PROTECTED.

--A RECONVENED GENEVA IS THE MOST SUITABLE FORUM FOR REACHING A GENERAL SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, AND PLO PARTICIPATION "ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH OTHER PARTICIPANTS" IS NECESSARY.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE THE LANGUAGE OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT A DECISION WAS REACHED ON PLO PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA AS PART OF THE JORDANIAN DELEGATION, THE SOVIETS MAY SIMPLY BE RELUCTANT TO REVEAL SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT AT THIS TIME, IF IT EXISTS.
(CONFIDENTIAL) MOSCOW 18385, 12/25.

4. MOZAMBIQUE: TROUBLE IN THE NORTH?

EMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES REPORTS PERSISTENT RUMORS OF DISTURBANCES IN THE NORTH OF MOZAMBIQUE, POSSIBLY INCLUDING THE CITY OF BEIRA. THE EMBASSY OBSERVES:

--MOST REPORTS REFER TO MACONDE TROOPS, WHO PROBABLY SPARKED LAST WEEK'S SHORT-LIVED UPRISING IN LOURENCO MARQUES.

--SOURCES INDICATE THE GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE AIRLIFTED TROOPS TO THE NORTH.

EMBASSY COMMENT: MOST EMBASSY INFORMANTS BELIEVE THAT LAST WEEK'S EVENTS, HOWEVER SPONTANEOUS OR ISOLATED, WERE ONLY THE FIRST TANGIBLE EXPRESSION OF A DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE THAT HAS BEEN BUILDING OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. (CONFIDENTIAL) LOURENCO MARQUES 1358, 12/24.

5. QUAI REPORTS SOUTH AFRICAN VIEWS ON ANGOLA
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QUAI ACTING DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA HAREL TOLD EMBASSY PARIS THAT HE THOUGHT THE SOUTH AFRICANS ARE WORKING TOWARD PARTITION OF ANGOLA. HAREL SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR TO PARIS:

--FINDS THE IDEA OF PARTITION TEMPTING (ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT HE WAS EXPRESSING HIS GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS);

--IMPLIED THAT IN SOUTH AFRICAN THINKING A MILITARY STALEMATE IS A USEFUL STEP TOWARD LATER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MPLA. (CONFIDENTIAL) PARIS 33695, 12/24.

6. THAILAND: KHUKRIT IS HOLDING HIS OWN

EMBASSY BANGKOK BELIEVES THAT SPECULATION THAT KHUKRIT'S COALITION GOVERNMENT WILL NOT LAST MUCH LONGER IS PREMATURE. THE OPPOSITION HAS BEEN PREDICTING HIS FALL WITHIN TWO TO THREE MONTHS WITH GENERAL ELECTIONS TO FOLLOW, BUT:

--MANY POLITICAL PARTIES FEAR THEY LACK THE FINANCES AND ORGANIZATION TO WEATHER NEW ELECTIONS.

--IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD NOW, KHUKRIT WOULD BENEFIT MOST.

FORMER THAI ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL KRIT SIWARA IS BEING TOUTED AS A STRONG CANDIDATE FOR PRIME MINISTER IN A FUTURE COALITION OF CONSERVATIVE AND MODERATE PARTIES, BUT UNTIL HE IS ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT TALK OF HIS CANDIDACY HAS LITTLE MEANING.

EMBASSY COMMENT: BARRING A MAJOR CRISIS WHICH KHUKRIT HANDLES BADLY, THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN ALL LIKELIHOOD WILL BE ABLE TO SURVIVE A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR SOME TIME TO COME. (SECRET) BANGKOK 26801, 12/25. KISSINGER

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